THE SABBATH-DAY.

An Address to the Members

OF THE

WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE,

31, RED LION SQUARE,

ON

SUNDAY EXCURSIONS.

BY THE

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PRINCIPAL OF THE COLLEGE.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

I HAVE purposely abstained from mixing the important question of the Saturday Half-holiday with the one which is discussed in this paper. That question rests on its own merits. There is not, so far as I am aware, any difference of opinion upon it. If anything I could have said would have increased the chance of its being generally granted, I would have said it. But I am writing for those who will, of course, receive it as a boon, not for those who require to be persuaded of its equity. Men of the most opposite parties are united in influencing them. I can only hope that their arguments will be effectual; perhaps I can aid them best by keeping silence.

THE SABBATH-DAY.

At the Meeting before the beginning of this Term it was proposed that the Members of the College, or as many of them as found it convenient, should make some excursions into the country. One of them was to be led by an Entomologist, one by a Botanist, one by a Geologist. A conversation arose about the day which would be best for the students as well as the teachers. A Saturday was fixed upon for the first excursion. Then one of the students suggested, with great quietness and modesty, that he could see no harm in making such journeys, hereafter, on a Sunday. A few showed that they agreed with the speaker; some gave signs of disapprobation. Then one of the Council, a layman, whose words have great weight with all of us, stated with much earnestness and solemnity his own experience, as a hard-working professional man, of the blessing which Sundays conferred on those who used them in seeking strength for the duties of the week. He added his opinion, that working men and professional men would both be sacrificing this benefit if they gave up the day to the pursuit of entertainment or of physical knowledge. What he said made a marked impression on the Meeting. It was also clear that many differed from him, both among the students and in the Council.

As Principal, I had no desire to stifle this discussion. Perhaps I should have done more rightly if I had taken pains to prolong it. So several of our friends thought. They said, that when such a controversy was once raised it ought to be thoroughly worked out. It was not, they urged, an abstract question; it was one which concerned us directly as a College of Working Men; our decision upon it might lead us to do certain acts, or to abstain from certain acts; it might modify the influence, little or great, which we exercise over those who do not belong to our body. They, therefore, proposed that we should even go out of our way to revive the discussion. In relation to one point or another, it was going on all around us; the students were continually hearing arguments about it; most of them must have arrived at some sort of conclusion about it. Would it not be better to compare notes,—at least to do our best, that we might understand one another if we came to no agreement?

I believe all the Council were anxious for this result. But some of them said that discussions do not always lead to mutual understanding, but rather to mutual misunderstanding. The experience of the discussions about the Sabbath-Day, they said, was especially discouraging. Men came to them ready armed with opinions and arguments with which they had been furnished by journals on one side or the other. The voices of those who felt difficulties in coming to a decision were drowned. Those who could not say, "Aye" or "No," to a particular proposition, were supposed to be indifferent, or to be trimmers. Most came rather to teach than to learn—rather to abuse than either. These statements and these fears might be exaggerated; but we must all admit that they were not quite without justification. They did not induce the Council to forego its wish for a general conference on the subject; but they led it to resolve unanimously that, before the conference

took place, a paper should be drawn up by the Principal, which should express his understanding of the points in dispute, of the method in which they could be most successfully dealt with, of the relation in which this topic stands to the objects and principles of our College. Of course, I was to state my own opinions freely and unreservedly—not to fetter myself with the thought that I was the mouth-piece of any one else—not to fetter others by my judgment merely because they might wish to know what it was, and might be inclined, as they always are, to treat it kindly and respectfully. I accept the duty with some fear, but yet thankfully. My wish, I trust and hope, is not to bring you over to my side—if I have a side—but to put you in a position for seeking the truth, and for separating whatever there is of chaff from whatever there is of wheat in my notions, or in the notions of any one else.

I think it is better to start from the question which is nearest to us, than to begin with general speculations on the Sabbath-Day. If we fix our minds upon this point,—shall we, as members of this College, make Sunday excursions for geology, entomology, or botany?—we shall be less likely to set ourselves up as judges of other men. Yet we shall discover—and this is one of the most awful and yet one of the most consolatory of all discoveries—that we can do nothing, little or great, which does not involve a principle concerning all human beings. That thought will not make us pedantical, or conceited, or formal, unless we pervert it grievously. Those who think that the eyes of Europe, or of England, or of London, or of their own parish, are fixed upon them, may be very silly, as well as very dishonest, in their actions. We know that such eyes are not fixed upon us, and never will be. But we know that the eyes of God are fixed upon us one and all, and always will be; and that belief, if we cherish it, will

make our acts simple as well as earnest. We shall not be asking much what people are likely to think of our doings, but we shall try to think calmly and steadily of them ourselves. And then, when we have not time for much deliberation—when we must act suddenly—we shall still not be hasty; our minds will so habitually recognise a principle, that whatever we do will be done in conformity with it, not in violation of it.

Those who are in favour of these excursions are likely to defend them in some such way as this :—They will say that ours is a College for Working Men; that we are bound to claim the day of rest for them as a day of rest; that rest without recreation of some kind is a mere name; that many of our working brethren combine it with recreations of a very low kind; that if we can combine it with higher objects, we are bearing a useful witness to them, we are helping to raise them. They will say, that in so doing we are acting consistently with one of our fundamental principles, which is, that all studies have a religious meaning and purpose, that we are not to regard any as profane. They will say, that this lesson is often directly denied in our churches and chapels,—all subjects being denounced as secular except those which are introduced into sermons; the six days being surrendered to worldliness and to mammon, on condition that the seventh is given to God. They will urge that a College has a right to make this use of the day, because the Sunday is not a Divine institution, whatever the Jewish Sabbath may have been. They will allege that there is no Scriptural authority for its appointment; that the early Fathers protested against Jewish Sabbatising; that the Protestant Reformers, English as well as Continental, were not strict in the observance of our Sabbath, and often spoke of it as a recurrence to the Law from which the Gospel had set them free; that Tyndale, the first translator of the Testament from the

original into English, and a noble confessor for the truth, went so far as to maintain that the Church might, if it pleased, substitute a tenth day for a seventh. They will urge the contradictions in practice of those who wish to draw a line between things that should be done, and should not be done, on the Sabbath-Day; the disgust which those who adopt the strictest rule produce in children; the sottish habits which grow up in countries where recreation is prohibited. They will say that an English Sabbath has a gloom which does not belong to the Sabbath either of Protestants or of Roman Catholics on the Continent; and that our people are learning to hate our religion in consequence of this difference. They will conclude, therefore, that there is no reason against the course which they recommend; and that the increase of hypocrisy, and, consequently, of irreligion, demands the protest which is involved in it.

To these arguments those on the other side will answer, that the Sunday ought assuredly to be a day of rest for those who are working in the week; but that it is not a day of rest in those countries where it is regarded merely as a holiday, and is not believed to be a Divine institution. In those countries, they will say, shops are open all the Sunday, mechanics labour, as on other days, at their ordinary occupations. Take away, they will continue, the sense of sanctity which attaches to the Sunday in England, and this will be *more* the case here than elsewhere, because we are a more busy people than others, a more money-getting people, and because it is not in our nature to value amusement as many people on the Continent value it. It signifies not, they will say, to the working man, what fathers or reformers may have said; the results of their doctrines show that *he* would not be the better for adopting it, but would lose the day which all physical as well as all moral considerations prove that he has need of.

Let him turn from fathers and reformers, they will add, to the Bible. That tells him of a distinct law of God appointing the day. You may say that this law has been abrogated for Christians; but it is part of a code which prohibits idolatry, murder, adultery, robbery. Are these portions of it abrogated? What security, it will be said, is there for the rest if one is set aside? Will you talk of these as mere laws for a particular community? Or will you say that the natural justice of them is sufficient to enforce them? Do you find it so? Could the laws of England really check murder, adultery, robbery, unless they recognised a Divine law at the basis of them? Will an appeal to men's sense of their propriety avail? You, it will be added, as a College exist to maintain the highest privileges of the working man—of those which belong to him as a man. Can you do this if you confound this day with other days? Our fathers have told us that this day bears witness of our obligation to God, of his care for us voluntary, sinful beings. You say that it is a fitting time for looking after insects or strata. Which doctrine, it will be asked, is the nobler or the more elevating?

Here are two sets of arguments directly opposed to each other. How am I to deal with them? I begin by asking myself whether the parties have anything in common, anything upon which they are agreed? I find this point of agreement. Both acknowledge the Sunday as a fact. Both admit that it is a fact of the utmost importance to the working people. Both, too, I think, admit that it is a wonderful fact. How such a day should have come to be recognised at all; how it should have brought itself into the institutions of so many nations differing in customs, language, religious opinion; how it should have lasted on from age to age; how it should have stood its ground against a multitude of opposing influences—all this is very strange, indeed. We are told on one side—and the

statement is undoubtedly true—that the most eminent fathers of the Christian Church had a dread of all relics of Judaism. Therefore, they can have had little to do with its establishment. The Roman empire knew it only as one of the institutes of the Jewish people, whom they had always despised, and at last crushed. Why should the emperors desire to adopt it? In later times, Roman Catholic priests and kings allowed it to be confounded with other holidays, and even permitted the doing of work upon it. So that these kings and priests cannot account for its preservation through the Middle Ages as a day unlike all other Church holidays. On the Continent those who were most active in the Reformation, as we have just heard, did not encourage a reverence for the Sabbath in the countries over which they had influence; so that its continuance since the sixteenth century is not owing to them. Here, in England, the upper classes have never been very earnest in the observance of it. Merchandise has threatened it; a majority of the clergy, till lately, were inclined to think rather lightly of it. Which of these will explain its perpetuity? The Scotch people and the English Puritans, who have been the great defenders of it, are said to have caused people to dislike it by their severity. How, then, can we ascribe to these the hold which it has taken upon the mind of either nation? I am not, you will observe, producing any new or doubtful facts, any which I have need to establish by proofs of my own. They are acknowledged by all; they are pressed with great eagerness by those who deny the Sunday to be a Divine institution.

There is another point, also, upon which the opponents on this subject are in unison. They agree that widely as this institution of a seventh day has been diffused amongst tribes the most unlike each other in character and origin, it has been derived to them from a single people; from

one which stood alone and separate among the nations. Those who defend the Sabbath most strenuously, trace it to the fourth Commandment; those who wish to disparage it call it Jewish. Both, too, admit that while the week has remained with its division into six working days and one resting day, the resting day has been changed. One party insists strongly upon the fact; for how, say they, can you allege the permanence of the law when it applies to a different subject? The other affirms that it would be an absolute contradiction if the Christian day of rest were not the day of the Resurrection of our Lord from the dead.

I weigh these facts in my mind, and what inference am I to draw from them? I can draw but one. That division of time, which I cannot attribute to human policy, civil or ecclesiastical; that which has appeared to be derived from a people whom Christians regard with especial abhorrence; that which has survived the destruction of this people's polity; that which has connected itself so strangely with an event which it is a part of their religion to deny—I must regard as having the most remarkable tokens of Divine origin and Divine preservation. No opinions coming from the persons whom I reverence most can shake that conviction in my mind. It is not shaken even by its putting me in agreement with some whom I cannot reverence, against many of whose conclusions and practices I feel bound to raise my testimony. And holding this opinion, I think I have an especial call to maintain it on behalf of my country generally, and of the working-classes particularly. Instead of trying to convince our statesmen and churchmen that this institution depends upon their good pleasure, that they or their predecessors had anything to do with the making of it, or that they can unmake it, I would tell them broadly and plainly that this is one of the strongest witnesses that there is another Ruler of the world than they—one of the clearest and most

satisfactory evidences that the order of it is not left to their caprice, and that the Lord of All cares much more for his creatures than they have ever cared for them, or ever will. To maintain that position may be a very light thing for fine ladies or gentlemen, or for schoolmen, but for us it is everything. If we contract that order which is fixed and universal, if we bring everything within the sphere of that which is limited and accidental, we give up our own cause—we lose the only standing-point from which we can ever hope to move society, or to prevent its worst habits and traditions from becoming more and more partial and intolerable.

On this ground, then, I dissent entirely from those admirable men,—the Reformers of the sixteenth century,—who talked of the Sabbath as if it were an institution which churches or governments had created, or which they could alter. When one first hears of such sentiments from them, they fill one with wonder; because Reformers were, above all men, interested in denying the arbitrary powers of churches as well as of states, in maintaining that they were bound in by fixed and eternal laws which they could not transgress without destroying themselves. But when we look more deeply into the meaning of this language, we find that it had a very great justification,—that these Reformers were maintaining a noble principle, and that, if they erred in the application of it, their very error may be a greater help to us than the right speaking of less honest men. Their great work was to assert that laws and statutes are useful for the denunciation of outward crime, for the awakening men's consciences to a perception of their inward evil, for asserting the right which is opposed to it; but that they are utterly ineffectual to deliver any man's conscience from the evil of which they accuse it, or to bring him into conformity with the right which they declare. These Reformers were to testify that

righteousness dwells originally in God Himself; that it must be exhibited to man in a Person; that only by trust in that Person can a man be delivered from an evil conscience, or made radically right. This distinction, which, as it seems to me, lies at the very root of all morality,—of national as well as individual morality,—they asserted manfully and consistently in reference to all subjects. They said, and all experience echoes their assertion, that a law against murder cannot destroy in any man an impulse to murder; that if it is combined with nothing else, it may even awaken or stir up that impulse. Although, therefore, they would have enforced, with all diligence and eagerness, statutes for the prevention of the crime and the punishment of the criminal, they did not look to these for any moral or spiritual reformation. What could they expect from enforcing the Sunday, from making that a part of dry legal obligation? They expected nothing. They, therefore, said, "Let the states enforce this day if they find it needful for their purposes; if they find it good for the civil order of the commonwealth, just as they pass other rules and statutes against crimes which disturb it. We, as Christians, may submit to such laws, as we do to the others; but they do not affect us. We who worship God in the spirit, we who are under the Gospel, are above such laws. They do not interfere with us; but for us they are simply human laws, not Divine."

I most entirely accept the meaning of this statement, though I dissent from the inference that is drawn from it. To me the Christian Sabbath is a part of God's Gospel to mankind; a witness of the relation in which He stands to man; and, therefore, I regard it as a Divine institution. This view of it I have derived from the Book which is often appealed to on one side, often censured on the other, as containing mere dry and formal precepts for the

observance of it. I find no such dry and formal precepts in any part of the Bible. The Fourth Commandment is distinguished from the commandments against murder, against adultery, against stealing, inasmuch as *they* are direct and arbitrary; and *this* comes before us clothed with a reason. The reason becomes actually a part of the law. The law perishes and cannot be observed when they are disjoined. The reason presents God in a relation to his creatures. They are to rest because He rests, and to work because He works. The reason presents Him as caring for the man-servant, and the maid-servant, and the cattle. So far, then, from looking upon this commandment as one which appeals less to the heart and judgment of mankind than those which are directed against specific crimes, I rather think it gives them a new and higher character. Separately taken, they might be looked upon as mere provisions against certain overt acts which disturb the peace of society. Viewed in the light of this commandment, they are indications of a Divine Will with which man is meant to be in conformity; they show that there is a unity and fellowship between God and man which all wrong doings have not been able to break. This announcement of an order of rest and work, of human states which are the image of Divine states, occurring in the midst of precepts which presume the existence of all sin and evil, is the greatest and divinest witness I know of for the true glory of man, and against those notions which would represent man as a castaway.

All the language of the prophets of the Old Testament accords with this view of it. They represent it as a sign between God and the nation,—a witness that it is holy because He is holy. They denounce the Jewish people for not receiving the Sabbaths as the witness of God's relation to them, and therefore of forgetting the relation in which they all stand to each other, in which

the rich stands to the poor, the master to the servant. Still the ground of that relation was only imperfectly discovered. It might be supposed that it was an arbitrary union established with one nation, that it did not concern mankind. Till one came who could call Himself the Son of God and the Son of Man, who could prove that He was both, that doubt necessarily continued; the meaning of all institutions,—of this most especially,—remained obscure. What brought it forth in the fulness of its power and meaning, was the perverted notion of the Pharisees respecting the design of it. They thought of the Lord God of Israel just as the heathen thought about their gods,—that He had appointed certain services, not out of love to his creatures, not to bind them to Him, but merely because He had certain claims upon them which in this way they were to fulfil. He had snatched one seventh of their time for Himself; the other six they might use for themselves. This habit of mind set them in deadly hostility with Jesus. For He came testifying, by word and deed, of a Father, who was not making demands upon men, but was seeking after them in their wanderings, and was the enemy of their enemies; was sending his Son to deliver them. He *chose* the Sabbath-Day, specially above other days, for healing the sick. It was not that He said, "These acts *may* be done on this day." He said always, "I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it." This *was* his fulfilment of the law which appointed the Sabbath-Day. The Pharisees never supposed that He was merely making a special exemption. They felt that He was asserting a principle by His cures. Therefore they went about to kill Him. For as St. John shows us, they connected his claim as the Son of Man to be the Lord of the Sabbath-Day with his claim to be the Son of God, and to work as his Father worked. The day had testified of God's relation to man.

It was Christ's day only because He was the person in whom that relation existed and was realized.

I cannot tell when or how the first day of the week was substituted by Christians for the seventh. I can produce no texts or documents declaring that the alteration was to be. I thank God that I cannot. If I could find such documents, I should wish them away; I should suspect them of being forged. This is my proof of the Divinity of the institution,—that the day which most expresses the whole sense and meaning of the Sabbath, which testifies of God's reconciliation to his creatures, of his treating them, in his Son, as his redeemed children, *forced* itself into the place of the other; that the ground of the ordinance being discovered, it necessarily found the only adequate form in which to clothe itself; that the Sabbath of the Law gave way to the Sabbath of the Gospel just because the Law altogether gave place to the Gospel altogether.

I think, then, that I am not the least at issue in principle with the Reformers. Only I can claim what they felt to be a venerable institution, as a sign of the truth which they maintained, instead of its being, as they found it, an awkward obstacle in the way of the assertion of that truth.

And so we can avoid another danger which has grown, I think, out of their inability to recognise the Sabbath as anything but a legal ordinance for a peculiar nation. There did arise a nation which learnt most faithfully the doctrines of the Reformation as they were delivered at Geneva. But the Scotch Reformers, instead of following the Reformer of Geneva in his doctrines respecting the Sabbath, enforced it with a rigour which had been known in no other part of Christendom. The fact may be easily explained. They discovered that the Jewish nation bore witness as none other did of God's direct government over nations. They felt that what was true for Judæa

had not ceased to be true for Scotland. They asserted with a vigour and manliness, of which there is no parallel in modern history, that they were in covenant with God, and that He was their King and Lawgiver. I do not think lightly of that faith; I trace to it all the moral strength and all the intellectual cultivation of Scotchmen. I believed they had hold of a truth which we ought to hold fast also. But it was a national faith, not a human faith. And when it was combined with the lessons that had been learnt on the Continent, this effect followed inevitably. The Sabbath was regarded as a legal institution, not as a Gospel institution, not as an institution for humanity. It was founded on the law given by Moses, not on the grace and truth of that law which came by Jesus Christ. The day of rest became a day for preaching sermons and hearing them. I am not aware that the Jewish Sabbath, at any time, was of this character. Yet I am far from finding fault with the Scotch for their mode of observing it. The sermons certainly cultivated in them great critical and metaphysical subtlety. As long as that tendency was kept in check by a pure and noble domestic life, it bore probably some evil, but more good, fruits. Yet I cannot think that the day so treated contained the Gospel which it was intended to contain. I must hold that it has done more than all things else to destroy the distinction between Law and Gospel in the Scotch mind, which the Reformers lived to establish, or to place it on a new and false ground. And I maintain that it is our duty not to blame the Scotch for exalting the Sabbath too highly, but to prove that they have not exalted it enough; that they have degraded it from the honour which Christ vindicated for the day of rest by his acts on earth, and which ought to have been attached to it for ever when it became associated with his victory over death and the grave, with his reconciliation of mankind.

But can I pass at once from these considerations to a conclusion respecting Sunday amusements or Sunday excursions? Certainly not. By taking the Bible as my guide, by attempting to derive my idea of a Divine institution from that, I have made such a jump impossible. For the Bible, so far as I read, says nothing of amusements or excursions. The Old Testament is as silent about them as the New. Each has a much sublimer, yet a much more practical, message to you and to me. The New teaches that the idea of Godhead, as involving incessant movement and fluctuation, which is the idea that heathen worshippers derived of it from the movements and fluctuations of nature, is an altogether imperfect idea, and false because imperfect; that the idea of it as mere rest and self-enjoyment, which is the idea that the philosopher derived of it from the permanence that he found needful to his own soul, is an imperfect idea, and false because imperfect; that the Living God unites rest and work in Himself as He has united them in us. The Old Testament imparts to me this sublime lore, and works it into the very order of life, so that it may be a possession for all. It joins with this the practical lore that God cares for the commonest doings of his humblest creatures; for the rest and the work of the man-servant and the maid-servant The Old Testament calls upon the nation of the Jews to enter into this loving purpose of God, and not to run counter to it, by dishonouring work or dishonouring rest, by allowing private covetousness to interfere with God's ordinance for all his subjects. The New Testament interprets to me the doctrine of the Old, showing me in whom God rests, through whom God works; how men may rest in Him, how men may work for Him. It connects the Sabbath-Day thus with the highest theology and the most perfect humanity. It tells me how impossible it is that one should be divided from the

other. The New Testament gives me the most practical application of these lessons, telling me that those acts which minister most to the well-being of men, bodily as well as spiritually, are those in which God delights on the Sabbath-Day, and which declare his purpose in instituting it; that through these men may be brought to apprehend the work which He, as a Father, is always doing for his children, as well as the rest which He designs for them.

A book which gives us this kind of help for the disposition and harmony of our lives, serves our purpose better, I think, than if it had contained specific directions when we should or should not botanize and geologize. He who studies it most carefully will wish least that he could find these rules in it. He will learn from it principles which give a new mould to all his thoughts. But in the application of these principles to particular cases, he must know how often he has blundered,—how much he has been taught by his blunders. He must become every day more anxious to distinguish between ends which are fixed and certain and means which are variable according to the circumstances of time and place: —every day more confident that the right means will be discovered at last if the right ends are sought;—every day more alive to the temptations into which he falls so easily, of assuming his own conclusions to be Divine, or of regarding the conclusions of other men as diabolical inspirations.

You will have seen that I reject some of the arguments by which excursions on Sunday are commonly defended, quite as strongly as any person can do who thinks that they are directly condemned in the Bible. So far as they depend upon the notion that the day of rest is not a Divine institution, that we may, therefore, turn it to what account we please, so far I regard them as evil altogether,—specially

evil in a College of Working Men, who, as I have urged, have a stronger interest than all others (if their interests can be separated from those of others) in maintaining that they have received this gift from God and not from man. And, therefore, the argument that by such excursions, undertaken for this reason, we are doing what in us lies to protest against a Pharisaical religion, also falls to the ground. The duty of protesting against such a religion I feel as strongly as any one can. I regard it not as an excess of faith, but as a denial of the foundation of the faith; as a denial of the Father, and of the Son who revealed Him. But I have no hope of encountering this religion in close quarters, or with any success, unless I can avail myself of the testimonies which God has established against it and for the true. Among the foremost of these I regard the day of rest. So far as we are able to assert the worth, and bring out the meaning, of that day, in our Lord's own way, so far we lay the axe to the root of all hard and cruel notions of our Heavenly Father; so far we proclaim that He is a reconciled Father in his Son, who cares for all, and that He calls upon all to recognise Him in that character.

The complaint against us,—the clergy,—which is one of the other pleas for seeking rest in country excursions rather than in the Churches, I am less able to refute. I feel most painfully for my brethren and for myself that we have not preached the Gospel which the day itself preaches; that we have laid burdens upon men rather than declared to them the Deliverer from burdens; that we have not interpreted to them satisfactorily God's rest or God's work, and that, therefore, we have not shown them what their own rest or their own work is to be. If others can clear their consciences of this charge, I cannot clear mine. I am sure that if our sermons did contain the message which they might contain, though they would

offend many proud and self-righteous people, they would attract those who are weary and heavy laden; and that we should have no ignominious lamentations to make over the greater attractions of art or of nature. Whatever lessons there are for us in the abandonment of our churches by the working people, I should wish to lay earnestly to heart. I never enter my own Church or any other without rejoicing that the sermon is not the chief part of the service. The prayers contain the fullest testimony that God is our Almighty and most merciful Father; that we have all the right to call Him by that name, and to confess that we have erred and strayed from his ways; that He pardons and absolves all who thus turn to Him and believe the good news concerning Him which his Son has brought us. Nevertheless, I cannot expect the people to understand what this means if we do not faithfully proclaim it to them; and I know well that there is much in our Churches which discourages the thought and makes it a mockery that all meet in them as brethren of the same family. Let this argument, then, go for what it is worth; I shall not try to answer it farther than by saying, that the longer I live and the more I mix with working men, the more I am convinced that the lesson which concerns them as human beings conscious of evil, is the one which they are wanting, and that no lessons which they can receive about anything in heaven or earth, or the waters under the earth, can be a compensation or substitute for it. I do not say this as an excuse for us; it shows how great our failure has been. But I must say it because it is the principle which I announced when our College was opened. I said, I could not withhold from working people lessons on theology, whatever risk there might be in giving them, because I was sure they demanded such, and could not be content without them, because I was sure that theology would mix itself dishonestly with

other studies, if we did not openly proclaim that it had a relation to all; because I was sure that human life is inexplicable without it.

And this I will say also in defence of my brother clergymen: that though I differ much with many of them, I do not know any men who, on the whole, care so much for the working people, or would make so many sacrifices for them, —any men who are more really desirous that the Sunday should be a blessing, not a curse or privation to them,— any who,if they knew how, would do more that they might regard the worship of God as a delight and as hallowing all other delights. I do not say that we have succeeded in making this impression upon you—I am nearly certain that we have not; but my own knowledge of the clergy leads me to this conviction, and I should be mean and cowardly if I did not express it. They have never been, as a body, hostile to the recreations of the people. At one time they were even passionately eager to connect them with Sunday, and denounced the opposite feeling in the Puritans with a vehemence which offended, I think justly, the moral sense of the country. If of late they have taken a different and apparently opposite line, it has been partly from a wish to repair that error, chiefly from a conviction that the Sunday has an inconceivable blessing for the people, of which they are likely to deprive themselves. I am persuaded that they have been wrong in many of the measures in which they have allowed themselves to be mixed up, and in which they sometimes have been leaders. All repressive enactments on the subject of the Sunday, I think, we should be the first to say, that we do not want. Even what seemed to me and many others the very legitimate experiment of last Session to suppress Sunday trading, I now perceive indicated an over-trust in legislation—a distrust in moral influences. I accept the wild demonstrations in the Park as Divine signs that there are

other ways than this by which the upper classes must help to vindicate the Sunday for the man-servant and the maid-servant. My business, however, is not with the upper classes, of whom I know nothing, and over whom I have no influence, but with my own class and your class.

I think we have misunderstood one another, because we have neither of us been very clear about our own aims. Many worthy and benevolent persons have sought to persuade *you* that things would go better in England if our Sundays were more like those which they have seen on the Continent; many excellent persons have sought to persuade *us* that things would go better in England if our Sundays were more like what they have seen in Scotland. It is not wonderful that you should have listened to one set of advisers, or we to the other. But I believe both are wrong. Englishmen cannot turn themselves into Frenchmen, or into Germans, or into Scotchmen. The effort is ridiculous; the result is insincerity. I do not mean that we are to make ourselves standards for Frenchmen, or Germans, or Scotchmen. The very same reason which leads me to say that we ought not to imitate them, should make them determine not to imitate us. God has given us each a national character; God has given us circumstances for the development of that character. The gift is only one degree less sacred than his universal gifts —those which bind us to mankind. Still less do I mean that Englishmen, or Frenchmen, or Germans, or Scotchmen, are to assume that their existing practices are the proper expressions of their national character; I am certain that they need reform, and that we need reform. Nor, again, do I hope for reform by bringing back the practice of some other age, supposing we could discover certainly what that was. If we are not acting in conformity with the circumstances in which we are placed

our actions will be wrong. But I do mean that our hope of improvement lies in our trying with all our might to discover what standard *we* are meant to follow, and from what standard *we* have wandered, and not in trying to fetch a new standard from some other country. I am speaking, you will perceive, of acts which clearly are *not* determined by any higher and more universal standard. To that I should at once bow ; but I have said before, and I say it again, the points I am considering receive no direct determination from Scripture. We must exercise our judgment upon them, to see what is or what is not fitting for us in reference to them. And I am trying to find how we may exercise that judgment most reasonably and most in accordance with the principles which are common to all.

I have touched, in these remarks, upon the argument that is founded upon the gloominess of our Sunday, which has been described with so much force by Mr. Dickens. I think all must acknowledge that there is great truth in his charge. And if it is true, as I fear it is, that the gloom is increasing, and that drunkenness is increasing with it ; the question how it may be diminished becomes very serious indeed. Every master of a family should consider it for his children and servants ; it becomes tremendously complicated when it presents itself in combination with the general state of London and of our manufacturing towns. That we should do anything to prevent our brethren from breathing the fresh air, and hearing the songs of birds on Sunday, seems to me monstrous ; that we may expect something from them I wish to believe; that kindly sympathies might be awakened by the effort to provide other entertainment for them besides these, I am persuaded. But it is evident to all who have considered the subject, that an Englishman has not the capacity of amusement, nor the power of forgetting the burden of existence, which a Frenchman has. Our neighbours'

lightness of heart we may, within certain limits, admire; we ought not to envy it. Our temperament may often make us disagreeable, and may even lead to great crimes; but it is associated with a deeper conscience of right and wrong, with a greater longing (if a desperate one) for a peace which circumstances cannot give. Where there is a heavy sense of bodily misery, accompanied with a dull sense of evil within, country and music will be feeble rivals of gin. They often fret the wound to which the other for a time makes the man insensible. When the danger is so monstrous, I dare not interfere with any counteractions of it, whether they are strong or weak, but I believe it is mere delusion to depend upon them.

Yes, some one will, perhaps, say, that is a clever way of showing that the parsons are the only physicians who will do for our state.—Rather, friend, a sad and sober confession how little we parsons have done what we might have done for it. I think that if we had delivered our message faithfully, if we had understood the length and breadth of it, if we had taken pains that all should know it, we might have healed the sore in the conscience which a great deal of our treatment has exasperated. We might have brought authentic proofs that the Healer of the conscience is the healer of men's bodily sorrows; that He does not draw that broad line between soul and body which we, who have learnt the philosophy of the schools rather than of the Bible, are wont to draw. And so we might have prepared them to breathe the fresh air and to listen to the songs of birds with a free, thankful, rejoicing heart. I still look for this blessed result. I believe that some will be raised up to do this work if we have proved ourselves unfit to do it. I believe that the "Age of Work" is to be also the age of this true and highest rest. And because I feel so,—because I believe that you may be setting this end before you in our College,—I would not

have you aim at a lower, poorer end. I would not have you fancy that the air and the singing of birds will do for you what it cannot do. I would have you believe that the kingdom of God is open to you all; and that if you seek that all, these things will be added to you, and will have a blessing in them which we scarcely dream of.

But you will say, "We in the College do not depend merely upon air and birds. We desire to help out their weakness by science. Have you not said that that is a holy pursuit?" I have said that Nature and Science and Work are all holy; if I did not say so and think so, I would have nothing to do with a Working College. But there is an old story about killing the hen to get the golden eggs. Believing that God is united to man, and has made him in his own Image, and has created the whole world, I must needs believe men to be holy, and Creation to be holy. Believing that He has given the Sabbath-Day and the six days as witnesses of his relation to man's rest and man's work, I must needs believe man's rest and man's work holy. I cannot tremble at any discoveries which science can make of a world which I believe to be God's; of any powers which man may exercise; seeing that he is God's servant and child. But take away this belief from me, and the witnesses that have been given us of it, and I shall not any longer believe anything or any person to be holy. I shall not know what holy means. I shall look with dread upon the dark mysteries which nature may disclose or science may disclose. Gods or Devils may lie hid everywhere. I shall have no courage to face the world, still less to look into the passages in my own soul. All becomes horrible to me. Thank God for all scientific men; for all experiments; for all the results of experiment! But we shall have none of them if a dark superstition or a dark unbelief gets possession of our inner life. Whatever keeps them away from a nation is helpful to its science. The removal of

any barriers against them is fatal to its science. This is my answer to those who say, Let us merge the Sabbath-Day in other days, because all days are holy; and to those who say, Let us merge divinity in geology and entomology, because geology and entomology are holy.

In these remarks I have not been denouncing your excursions so much as the arguments by which they are commonly defended, and the inference which is likely that you yourselves and others will draw from them. I said before, that I have no authority to condemn what God's Word has not condemned. I have only a right to point out to you what appear to me the duties of our position, the testimony which we may bear, the dangers into which we may fall. Perhaps it may occur to some of you to say, All such words are very well for a Clergyman. His, of course, is a peculiar position. He is watched by the religious world, and is on his good behaviour. We may do things which it would be absurd and out of the question for him to do. I deny that proposition altogether. If I thought these excursions good, I should think myself bound to go out with you, and take part in all you did. And I do think that a clergyman may do much in that way. I think we might go forth with parties into the country in the morning before our services, or after they were over; and might, without any formality, talk of things that were most interesting to us, or walk in silence and let God speak to us through the sky and earth. I believe such Sunday excursions might do much good to us all; and that they would interfere with no other lessons which that day has to teach us. I would leave geology and entomology, and all special pursuits in which special persons may be interested. I would keep the day for what is common, for what all may share in together. Many of my clerical brethren who have heavy parishes would find such walks impossible. I, who am an idler, could

join any of you who liked very well at six or seven in the morning, and walk for two or three hours, unless you who have been working all the week should find it difficult to rise so early. Perhaps you will turn the whole subject over in your minds; some day soon we may have a general discussion upon it. When we do, you will, perhaps, accept this paper, not as the reasoning of an advocate, nor yet as the sentence of a judge, but as the contribution of a friend to the study of a subject in which his connexion with you has given him a still deeper interest, than he would have felt in it even as a Churchman and a man.

THE END.

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